

INITIAL STUDY

FOR

**LAFCO 3074 – ACTIVATION OF SEWER POWERS
FOR JOSHUA BASIN WATER DISTRICT**

Prepared for:

San Bernardino County
Local Agency Formation Commission
215 "D" Street, Suite 204
San Bernardino, California 92415-0490

Prepared by:

Tom Dodson & Associates
2150 North Arrowhead Avenue
San Bernardino, California 92405

April 2007

**LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION
COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO**

**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
PROPOSED NEGATIVE DECLARATION**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) for San Bernardino County has prepared an Initial Study and Negative Declaration pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the following proposal:

Title: LAFCO 3074 – Activation of Sewer Powers for Joshua Basin Water District

Description: The Joshua Basin Water District (JBWD) proposes to activate its sewer powers under the State Water Code Section 31100 in order to acquire, manage, maintain and operate “package secondary treatment plants” anticipated to be built in the near future by private entities in response to the need for treatment and disposal of sewage from new development projects. If approved by LAFCO, the authorization would allow the JBWD to acquire and operate the “package secondary treatment plants” and also construct, and operate other facilities for the collection, treatment, and disposal (or recycling) of sewage within its service area.

Location: The proposed project encompasses the entire JBWD service area as it currently exists. JBWD is located approximately 75 miles east of the City of San Bernardino and 30 miles northeast of the City of Palm Springs, primarily within the Joshua Tree Community Plan area including five sections within the Homestead Valley Community Plan area, all within the unincorporated San Bernardino County. The area is bounded by the Joshua Tree National Park on the south, primarily the Town of Yucca Valley and the Hi-Desert Water District on the west, County Service Area (CSA) 70 Improvement Zone W-1 on the northwest, primarily the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center on the north, and the City of Twentynine Palms and the Twentynine Palms Water District on the east. The entire area encompasses approximately 96 square miles, and is described as follows:

Sections 1 through 4, and 9 through 16, Township 1 South, Range 6 East, Sections 1 and 2, 11 through 14, 22 through 28, and 33 through 36, Township 1 North, Range 6 East, Sections 23 and 24, 26 through 28, and 34 through 36, Township 2 North, Range 6 East, Sections 5 through 8, and 17 and 18, Township 1 South, Range 7 East, Sections 1 through 36, Township 1 North, Range 7 East, and Sections 20 through 36, Township 2 North Range 7 East, all of San Bernardino Meridian, in the County of San Bernardino, State of California.

Impacts: The Initial Study examined the environmental impacts of the project and determined that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment.

Date Issued: April 13, 2007

The proposed Negative Declaration and the Initial Study are available for public review at the LAFCO office at 215 North “D” Street, Suite 204, San Bernardino, CA 92415-0490 and on the Commission’s website at www.sbclafo.org. Office hours are from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. **The 30-day public review period for this document is from April 13, 2007 and ends May 14, 2007.**

The hearing before the Commission to consider the proposed Negative Declaration and Initial Study and project has not yet been scheduled.

Comments on these materials may be submitted within the public review period to Ms. Kathleen Rollings-McDonald, Executive Officer for LAFCO, at 215 North “D” Street, Suite 204, San Bernardino, CA 92415-0490, fax number (909) 383-9901.

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION
**NOTICE OF INTENT TO
ADOPT A NEGATIVE DECLARATION**

To: San Bernardino County
Clerk of the Board
385 North Arrowhead Ave.
San Bernardino, CA 92415

From: San Bernardino County
Local Agency Formation Commission
215 North "D" Street, Suite 204
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0490

Subject: Filing of Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration in compliance with Section 21092.3 of the Public Resources Code.

The San Bernardino County Local Agency Formation Commission is considering an application from the Joshua Basin Water District (LAFCO 3074) to activate latent sewer powers for the District.

Project Title

LAFCO 3074 - Activation of Sewer Powers for Joshua Basin Water District

<u>Not Yet Assigned</u>	<u>Ms. Kathleen Rollings-McDonald</u>	<u>(909) 383-9900</u>
State Clearinghouse Number	Lead Agency Contact Person	Telephone Number

Project Location

The proposed project encompasses the entire Joshua Basin Water District (JBWD) service area as it currently exists. JBWD is located approximately 75 miles east of the City of San Bernardino and 30 miles northeast of the City of Palm Springs within the unincorporated area of San Bernardino County. The entire area encompasses approximately 96 square miles, and is described as follows: Section 1 through 4, and 9 through 16, Township 1 South, Range 6 East; Section 1 and 2, 11 through 14, 22 through 28, and 33 through 36, Township 1 North, Range 6 East; Sections 23 and 24, 26 through 28, and 34 through 36, Township 2 North, Range 6 East; Sections 5 through 8, and 17 and 18, Township 1 South, Range 7 East; Sections 1 through 36, Township 1 North, Range 7 East; and Sections 20 through 36, Township 2 North, Range 7 East, all of the San Bernardino Meridian.

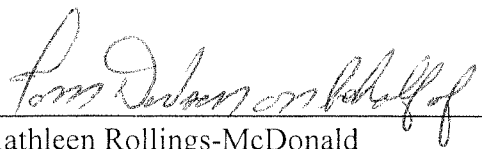
Project Description

The Joshua Basin Water District (JBWD) proposes to activate its sewer powers under the State Water Code Section 31100 in order to acquire, manage, maintain and operate "package secondary treatment plants" anticipated to be built in the near future by private entities in response to the need for treatment and disposal of sewage from new development projects. If approved by LAFCO, the authorization would allow the JBWD to acquire and operate the "package secondary treatment plants" and also, construct, and operate other facilities for the collection, treatment, and disposal (or recycling of), sewage within its service area. Note at this time there are no specific facilities proposed for implementation by the District.

Proposed Review Process

This is to advise that the San Bernardino County Local Agency Formation Commission has determined that a Mitigated Negative Declaration is the appropriate CEQA environmental determination for the proposed project and at a future date to be determined, the Commission proposes to hold a meeting to discuss and possibly recommend approval of the above project. After

public review of the Initial Study and proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration are completed, the Commission proposes to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration in accordance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. The proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration will be available for public review and comment from April 13, 2007 through May 14, 2007. Copies of the Initial Study are available at the Commission's office by request at the phone number and address identified above.

	4-12-07	
Kathleen Rollings-McDonald	Date	Title

Notice of Completion

State of California
Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

LAFCO 3074 - Activation of Sewer Powers for Joshua Basin Water District

Project Title

The proposed project encompasses the entire Joshua Basin Water District (JBWD) service area as it currently exists. JBWD is located approximately 75 miles east of the City of San Bernardino and 30 miles northeast of the City of Palm Springs within the unincorporated area of San Bernardino County. The entire area encompasses approximately 96 square miles, and is described as follows: Section 1 through 4, and 9 through 16, Township 1 South, Range 6 East; Section 1 and 2, 11 through 14, 22 through 28, and 33 through 36, Township 1 North, Range 6 East; Sections 23 and 24, 26 through 28, and 34 through 36, Township 2 North, Range 6 East; Sections 5 through 8, and 17 and 18, Township 1 South, Range 7 East; Sections 1 through 36, Township 1 North, Range 7 East; and Sections 20 through 36, Township 2 North, Range 7 East, all of the San Bernardino Meridian.

Project Location – Specific

Community of Joshua Tree

San Bernardino County

Project Location – City

Project Location – County

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project

The Joshua Basin Water District (JBWD) proposes to activate its sewer powers under the State Water Code Section 31100 in order to acquire, manage, maintain and operate “package secondary treatment plants” anticipated to be built in the near future by private entities in response to the need for treatment and disposal of sewage from new development projects. If approved by LAFCO, the authorization would allow the JBWD to acquire and operate the “package secondary treatment plants” and also, construct, and operate other facilities for the collection, treatment, and disposal (or recycling of), sewage within its service area. Note at this time there are no specific facilities proposed for implementation by the District.

San Bernardino County Local Agency Formation Commission

N/A

Lead Agency

Division

Local Agency Formation Commission, 215 North “D” Street, Suite 204, San Bernardino, CA 92415

Address Where Copy of Initial Study is Available

April 13, 2007 through May 14, 2007

Review Period

Ms. Kathleen Rollings-McDonald

909/383-9900

Contact Person

Area Code / Phone / Extension

**Notice of Completion and Environmental
Document Transmittal Form**

Mail to: State Clearinghouse, 1400 Tenth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 — 916/445-0613

See NOTE below

SCH # _____

1. **Project Title:** LAFCO 3074 - Activation of Sewer Powers for Joshua Basin Water District

2. **Lead Agency:** San Bernardino County Local Agency Formation Commission

3. **Contact Person:** Ms. Kathleen Rollings-McDonald

3a. **Street Address:** 215 North "D" Street Suite 204

3b. **City:** San Bernardino, CA 92415

3c. **County:** San Bernardino County

3e. **Phone:** 909-383-9900

Project Location The proposed project encompasses the entire Joshua Basin Water District (JBWD) service area as it currently exists. JBWD is located approximately 75 miles east of the City of San Bernardino and 30 miles northeast of the City of Palm Springs within the unincorporated area of San Bernardino County. The entire area encompasses approximately 96 square miles, and is described as follows: Section 1 through 4, and 9 through 16, Township 1 South, Range 6 East; Section 1 and 2, 11 through 14, 22 through 28, and 33 through 36, Township 1 North, Range 6 East; Sections 23 and 24, 26 through 28, and 34 through 36, Township 2 North, Range 6 East; Sections 5 through 8, and 17 and 18, Township 1 South, Range 7 East; Sections 1 through 36, Township 1 North, Range 7 East; and Sections 20 through 36, Township 2 North, Range 7 East, all of the San Bernardino Meridian.

4. **County:** San Bernardino County

4a. **City/Community:** Joshua Tree

4b. **Assessor's Parcel No.:** N/A

4c. **Section:** various, see above **Twp.:** various, see above

Ranges: various, see above

5a. **Cross Streets:** N/A

5b. **For Rural, Nearest Community:** Joshua Tree

6. **Within 2 miles:** 6a. **State Hwy #:** 62

6b. **Airports:** N/A

6c. **Railways:** N/A

6d. **Waterways:** N/A

7. Document Type

CEQA: 01. ☐ NOP

05. ☐ Supplement/Subsequent EIR

NEPA: 09. ☐ NOI

OTHER: 13. ☐ Joint Document

02. ☐ Early Cons

(Prior SCH No.: _____)

10. ☐ FONSI

14. ☐ Final Document

03. ☒ Neg Dec

06. ☐ NOE

11. ☐ Draft EIS

15. ☐ Other _____

04. ☐ Draft EIR

07. ☒ NOC

12. ☐ EA

08. ☐ NOD

8. Local Action Type

01. ☐ General Plan Update

05. ☐ Annexation

09. ☐ Rezone

12. ☐ Waste Mgmt Plan

02. ☐ New Element

06. ☐ Specific Plan

10. ☐ Land Division (Subdivision,

13. ☐ Cancel Ag Preserve

03. ☐ General Plan Amendment

07. ☐ Community Plan

Parcel Map, Tract Map, etc.)

14. ☒ Other: LAFCO//Activation of
sewer powers

04. ☐ Master Plan

08. ☐ Redevelopment

11. ☐ Use Permit

9. Development Type

01. ☐ Residential:

Units _____ Acres _____

07. ☐ Mining:

Mineral _____

02. ☐ Office:

Sq.ft. _____ Acres _____ Employees _____

08. ☐ Power:

Type _____ Watts _____

03. ☐ Shopping/Commercial

Sq.ft. _____ Acres _____ Employees _____

09. ☐ Waste Treatment:

Type _____

04. ☐ Industrial:

Sq.ft. _____ Acres _____ Employees _____

10. ☐ OCS Related

05. ☐ Water Facilities:

MGD _____ N/A

11. ☒ Other:

Activation of Sewer Powers

06. ☐ Transportation:

Type _____

10. **Total Acres:** -61,440

11. **Total Jobs Created:** N/A

12. Project Issues Discussed in Document

01. ☐ Aesthetics/Visual

09. ☐ Geologic/Seismic

17. ☐ Social

25. ☐ Wetland/Riparian

02. ☐ Agricultural Land

10. ☐ Jobs/Housing Balance

18. ☐ Soil Erosion

26. ☐ Wildlife

03. ☐ Air Quality

11. ☐ Minerals

19. ☐ Solid Waste

27. ☐ Growth Inducing

04. ☐ Archaeological/Historical

12. ☐ Noise

20. ☐ Toxic/Hazardous

28. ☐ Incompatible Land Use

05. ☐ Coastal Zone

13. ☐ Public Services

21. ☐ Traffic/Circulation

29. ☐ Cumulative Effects

06. ☐ Economic

14. ☐ Schools

22. ☐ Vegetation

30. ☐ Other _____

07. ☐ Fire Hazard

15. ☐ Septic Systems

23. ☐ Water Quality

08. ☐ Flooding/Drainage

16. ☐ Sewer Capacity

24. ☐ Water Supply

13. **Funding (approx.) Federal \$:** N/A

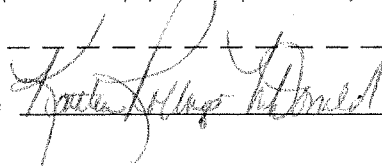
State \$: N/A

Total \$: N/A

14. **Present Land Use and Zoning:** land uses vary from open areas to low density residential to industrial

15. **Project Description** The Joshua Basin Water District (JBWD) proposes to activate its sewer powers under the State Water Code Section 31100 in order to acquire, manage, maintain and operate "package secondary treatment plants" anticipated to be built in the near future by private entities in response to the need for treatment and disposal of sewage from new development projects. If approved by LAFCO, the authorization would allow the JBWD to acquire and operate the "package secondary treatment plants" and also, construct, and operate other facilities for the collection, treatment, and disposal (or recycling of), sewage within its service area. Note at this time there are no specific facilities proposed for implementation by the District.

16. **Signature of Lead Agency Representative:**



Date: April 11, 2007

Reviewing Agencies

- ☐ Resource Agency
- ☐ Boating / Waterways
- ☐ Conservation
- ☐ Fish and Game
- ☐ Forestry
- ☐ Colorado River Board
- ☐ Dept. Water Resources
- ☐ Reclamation
- ☐ Parks and Recreation
- ☐ Office of Historic Preservation
- ☐ Native American Heritage Commission
- ☐ S.F. Bay Cons. And Dev't. Commission
- ☐ Coastal Commission
- ☐ Energy Commission
- ☐ State Lands Commission
- ☐ Air Resources Board
- ☐ Solid Waste Management Board
- ☐ SWRCB: Sacramento
- ☒ RWQCB: Region # 9
- ☐ Water Rights
- ☐ Water Quality

- ☒ Caltrans District 8
- ☐ Dept. of Transportation Planning
- ☐ Aeronautics
- ☐ California Highway Patrol
- ☐ Housing and Community Dev't.
- ☐ Statewide Health Planning
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Food and Agriculture
- ☐ Public Utilities Commission
- ☐ Public Works
- ☐ Corrections
- ☐ General Services
- ☐ OLA
- ☐ Santa Monica Mountains
- ☐ TRPA
- ☐ OPR — OLGA
- ☐ OPR — Coastal
- ☐ Bureau of Land Management
- ☐ Forest Service
- ☒ Other _____
- ☐ Other _____

For SCH Use Only:

Date Received at SCH _____ Catalog Number _____
Date Review Starts _____ Applicant _____
Date to Agencies _____ Consultant _____
Date to SCH _____ Contact _____ Phone _____
Clearance Date _____ Address _____

Notes: _____

INITIAL STUDY

FOR

**LAFCO 3074 – ACTIVATION OF SEWER POWERS
FOR JOSHUA BASIN WATER DISTRICT**

Prepared for:

San Bernardino County
Local Agency Formation Commission
215 "D" Street, Suite 204
San Bernardino, California 92415-0490

Prepared by:

Tom Dodson & Associates
2150 North Arrowhead Avenue
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April 2007

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Introduction

The Joshua Basin Water District (JBWD) was established in 1963 and encompasses approximately 96 square miles (63,360 acres) in southwestern San Bernardino County, California. The District provides domestic water supply from groundwater wells to approximately 4000 connections via a system that presently consists of approximately 220 miles of mainlines, four/five wells and 15/19 reservoirs. Its current water demand is approximately 1,700 acre feet per year. In the future, the District plans to construct an extension of the Morongo Basin Pipeline to Joshua Tree and would be entitled to purchase approximately 1,900 acre ft. of water per year from that system. The Mojave Water Agency would supply State Project Water (surface water) via the pipeline in the future. In addition to water supplied by JBWD, some private citizens have their own wells within the JBWD service area.

The District is regulated by the State Water Code and governed by a five- member elected Board of Directors. District operations are managed by a General Manager who is appointed by the Board of Directors. The District employs 16 staff members with four individuals in management, seven in the field and five in the office. The area population is currently estimated at approximately 9,000 persons. Growth rate projections for the JBWD range from 0.5 to 0.9% in the San Bernardino Joshua Tree Community Plan to 2 to 5% as anticipated by JBWD. The community, which has been primarily characterized as a retirement and second home community, is in transition to a community with more full time residents.

There are currently no sewers or wastewater treatment services within the JBWD service area. All sewage is treated and disposed of through onsite septic tank leach-line systems, cesspools or out-houses. No numerical objectives exist for groundwater quality. However, the Regional Water Quality Control Board goal for the area is to "maintain the existing water quality where feasible" (page 3-9, Colorado River Basin Water Quality Control Plan). Studies by JBWD show that septage from leach systems take approximately 22.5 years to reach the groundwater table and 3 to 4 years for septage from seepage pits to reach the groundwater table. Tests by the USGS have found that nitrates from this septage has reached the aquifer. This intrusion prompted JBWD to ask the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB or Regional Board) to limit development densities to protect the quality of the groundwater basin that is the source of drinking water in the area.

In general, the Regional Board mandates Waste Discharge Requirements for developments of more than five single-family homes, 20 mobile home spaces, 50 RV spaces, or 5,000 gallons of sewage per day. The basis for regulation is that sewage from onsite wastewater disposal systems eventually reach the groundwater table. The Regional Board also requires new development of densities higher than 2 dwelling units per acre in the Morongo Groundwater Basin to provide a sewage treatment system that reduces nitrates (NO_3), biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) and total suspended solids (TSS) in wastewater to a set of numerical objectives or provide studies that show that there will be no adverse impacts on aquifer water quality from disposal of the treated sewage.

The Regional Board policy has resulted in the requirement to install and operate "package secondary treatment plants" within the JBWD service area to treat the sewage from new developments. Under present circumstances, the proposed "package secondary treatment plants" that would be installed to treat sewage from a residential or commercial development would be operated through a homeowners association, Community Facilities District, or similar mechanism.

The wastewater quality would be regulated through waste discharge requirements (WDR) administered through the Regional Board. Disposal of the package plant treated effluent would be accomplished through subsurface seepage pits or leach fields. The package plants would be located on the equivalent area of a single family lot or adjacent to commercial, industrial or institutional use.

The Joshua Basin Water District (JBWD) proposes to activate its sewer powers under the State Water Code in order to acquire, manage, maintain and operate these "package secondary treatment plants". The Local Agency Formation Commission of San Bernardino County (LAFCO) has the authority to approve the proposed activation of JBWD's sewer powers, and an application has been submitted for LAFCO's consideration and approval.

JBWD was formed in 1963 to provide water service to the community of Joshua Tree. In 1974, JBWD adopted resolution 147-74 which activated its sewer powers. However, in 1976, as a part of considerations to seat special district members on LAFCO, the services of independent special districts were reduced to those being actively provided at that time, other services were to become "latent" powers which could be activated through a review process conducted by LAFCO. For the JBWD, that meant a reduction to authorized services to retail water service.

County Service Area (CSA) 70 exists within the JBWD service area and is authorized to provide sewer service. However, in order to do this, an improvement zone would have to be created within the CSA by The County. The County, as represented by the Special Districts Department, supports JBWD's proposal and is not seeking authorization to create an improvement zone to provide sewer service.

Under most circumstances, the activation of sewer powers would not be considered a project under CEQA as it does not involve a physical change in the environment. Similarly, the change in ownership for maintenance and operations purposes is also usually not considered a project under CEQA, unless it could result in substantial change in the physical environment. However, as the decision to activate JBWD's sewer powers is considered controversial by some entities in the community, this Initial Study has been compiled to examine the impact of the proposed project.

Project Location

The proposed project encompasses the entire JBWD service area as it currently exists, which totals approximately 96 square miles. JBWD is located approximately 75 miles east of the City of San Bernardino and 30 miles northeast of the City of Palm Springs, primarily within the Joshua Tree Community Plan area including five sections within the Homestead Valley Community Plan area, all within the unincorporated San Bernardino County. The area is bounded by the Joshua Tree National Park on the south, primarily the Town of Yucca Valley and Hi-Desert Water District on the west, County Service Area (CSA) 70 Improvement Zone W-1 on the northwest, primarily the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center on the north, and the City of Twentynine Palms and the Twentynine Palms Water District on the east.

Figure 1 shows the location of the JBWD service area. Table 1 describes the location of the JBWD service area. All of the following sections are included in the JBWD:

Table 1
PROJECT LOCATION (JBWD SERVICE AREA)

Township and Range	Section(s)
T2N, R6E	23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 34, 35, and 36
T2N, R7E	20 through 36
T1N, R6E	1, 2, 11 through 14, 22 through 28, and 33 through 36
T1N, R7E	1 through 36
T1S, R6E	1 through 4, and 9 through 16
T1S, R7E	5 through 8, 17, and 18

Note: All sections are referenced to the San Bernardino Base and Meridian.

T = Township
R = Range

N = North
S = South

E = East

Environmental Setting

The JBWD is located in the foothills of, and within, the southern portion of the Mojave Desert. Elevations in the service area range from approximately 2,100 to 4,900 feet above mean sea level. The highest point in the area is 4,880 feet above mean sea level in the Little San Bernardino Mountains in the southwestern portion of the District and the lowest point is at 2,096 feet in a dry lakebed, Coyote Lake, in the northeastern part of the site. The climate is mild to moderate with temperatures ranging from approximately 32°F in the winter to approximately 110°F in the summer. The area receives approximately 6 inches of precipitation per year, with some of that via thunderstorms that may be associated with substantial erosion and flash-flooding. Snow has the potential to occur at the higher elevations and does so occasionally.

Mountains in the JBWD service area include Copper Mountain (at approximately 3,705 ft.), Bunker Mountain and the Bartlett Mountains. The Pinto Mountain Fault, with a maximum probable earthquake magnitude of 6.5-7.5, traverses the JBWD from east to west. The soils in the area are primarily rocky in the foothills and sandy in the alluvial plains, except for clays within dry lake beds.

The JBWD overlies the Joshua Tree groundwater subbasin and Copper Mountain groundwater subbasin of the Morongo groundwater basin. Water supply for the JBWD has historically been extracted from the Joshua Tree subbasin. Water quality in the basin is generally good, with some fluoride and arsenic levels exceeding potable water standards in the lower aquifer. Natural annual recharge of the aquifer from stormwater is less than the amount of water pumped from the basin annually. Therefore, if current water demand trends continue and groundwater remains the only source of potable water in the area, the aquifer is at potential risk for overdraft and subsequent damage to the aquifer storage capacity. Imported water is available to the JBWD from the Mojave Pipeline, which supplies water from the State Aqueduct in Hesperia.

According to the Joshua Tree Community Plan Draft of the Draft San Bernardino County General Plan, the high desert flora include the Joshua Tree, yucca, bunchgrass, creosote, juniper, manzanita, catsclaw, sage, cactus, and annual wildflowers. The fauna in the area include the desert tortoise, jack and cottontail rabbits, ground squirrels, chuckwalla, pinion jays, eagles, quail, roadrunners, mule deer and a variety of migratory bird species.

Existing land uses are Resource Conservation (12%), Rural Living (73%), Single-Family Residential (10%), Multiple-Family Residential (2%), Commercial (1%), Industrial (1%), and Institutional and Floodway (1%). Approximately 17% of the area is within the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). There are no agricultural uses or preserves in the area.

Project Characteristics

The Joshua Basin Water District (JBWD) proposes to activate its sewer powers under the State Water Code Section 31100 in order to acquire, manage, maintain and operate "package secondary treatment plants" anticipated to be built in the near future by private entities in response to the need for treatment and disposal of sewage from new development projects. The Local Agency Formation Commission of San Bernardino County (LAFCO) is authorized to approve the activation of JBWD's sewer powers under Section 9 of LAFCO Rules and Regulations under Government Code Section 56700. JBWD has submitted its application for provision of sewer services to LAFCO. If approved by LAFCO, the authorization would allow the JBWD to acquire and operate the "package secondary treatment plants" and also, construct, and operate other facilities for the collection, treatment, and disposal (or recycling of), sewage within its service area. Note at this time there are no other specific facilities proposed for implementation by the District.

The proposed project can be examined as two separate, yet interconnected parts. The first part, an activation of latent sewer powers, would not result in any direct physical change to the environment, but is necessary in order for the management of the "package secondary treatment plants" to be performed by JBWD. The second part is the acquisition, management, operation and maintenance of the "package secondary treatment plants," which could occur if the District decides to assume responsibility for such plants if the latent sewer powers are authorized by LAFCO.

Under the proposed project, JBWD would be authorized to acquire and operate the "package secondary treatment plants" once they are installed by the developer in accordance with requirements of the Regional Board and County development requirements. The wastewater quality would be regulated through waste discharge requirements administered through the Regional Board and disposal of the treated effluent would be accomplished through a surface pond, subsurface seepage pit or leach field. The only immediate difference in wastewater treatment under the proposed project is the party responsible for operating and maintaining the treatment plants and the party directly responsible for meeting the Regional Board WDRs for the package plants.

Under the proposed project, the JBWD would also be empowered to construct and operate district-wide sewers, treat wastewater on a larger scale and dispose of, or recycle, wastewater. This could result in the future establishment of a district-wide sewage collection and treatment system and other district-wide water management programs such as wastewater re-use. However, such projects are not being considered at this time, because JBWD is not proposing to install and operate any facilities separate from those specific developments required to install the package

plants. Any specific future action that would result in a physical change in the environment would be subject to additional review under CEQA and is not be included in this evaluation. Since no facilities are being given consideration, it would be speculative to consider such facilities at this time. In accordance with Section 15145 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the potential effects of future undefined District constructed facilities will not be given further consideration in this document.

The “package plants” need to be actively managed by qualified personnel in order to ensure that the quality of effluent in the treated effluent meets Regional Board WDRs. The State of California is also considering new more stringent requirements for septic systems and an entity, such as a District, would be required to assist the State in compliance monitoring of such facilities if they are installed in the future within the District’s service area.

Currently, there are several new developments in the planning stages that would likely require the construction and operation of a “package sewage treatment plant.” JBWD proposes assume responsibility for operating these plants with a view to eventually integrating them into a future regional sewage collection and treatment system. This would allow efficiencies due to economies of scale and the potential ability to treat water to a higher quality more cost-effectively. In the meantime, JBWD has the expertise or can train or hire trained employees to efficiently manage the “package plants” in order to meet the WDR and protect the long-term quality of the groundwater it uses to supply its customers with potable water. In fact, it is this objective of protecting the long-term quality of the aquifer by ensuring that the package plants operate efficiently and effectively that is the primary reason for the District seeking to activate its sewerage powers.

The first “package sewage treatment plant” that JBWD anticipates would be constructed within its District boundaries would be to treat sewage generated by the Desert View Estates housing development. This development, TTM 16529, would consist of 61 single-family residences at a density of approximately four dwelling units per acre. The District has determined that the sewage generated by residents of the development (305 gallons per household) would average approximately 18,605 gallons per day. The “package sewage treatment plant” would be sized to treat the sewage from the development to secondary effluent standards (or as required by the Regional Board’s WDR for this treatment plant) and this secondary effluent would be disposed of through surface ponds, a subsurface seepage pit, or leach field.

Without the proposed project as described in this Initial Study, it is anticipated that each future housing or commercial development exceeding certain thresholds would be required to construct “package sewage treatment plants” to treat sewage from that development. Each would be operated by a private entity, such as a homeowners association (HOA), and be required to meet WDR as regulated by the Regional Board. With the proposed project, JBWD would own and operate each package plant and remove this responsibility from a HOA, which is generally ill-equipped to carry out maintenance and operation of a sophisticated package plant.

While the proposed project will not result in any near-term identifiable direct effects on the physical environment that would not occur without the project, it will provide the mechanism for the activities that could cause physical change to the environment. Therefore, a decision to approve of the activation of JBWD’s sewer powers by LAFCO is discretionary and considered a “project” under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378). As such, LAFCO must consider the potential impacts to the environment from approving and implementing this

project and comply with the requirements of CEQA to make a determination on the significance of the potential impacts.

This document is prepared in such a manner that RWQCB and other agencies can utilize it and the Lead Agency's CEQA determination to make decisions regarding the JBWD's ability to exercise its sewer authority, if granted by LAFCO.

This concludes the project description. If LAFCO provides the approval needed, the project will be implemented as outlined above. The remainder of this Initial Study consists of the most recent CEQA Environmental Checklist Form and the substantiation required to support the conclusions presented in this Form. Based on the findings and conclusions of this Initial Study, the County has made a preliminary determination that a Negative Declaration is the appropriate CEQA determination for this project. A final environmental determination will be made following the close of a 30-day comment period. It is necessary to circulate this document through the State Clearinghouse because the Regional Board is a responsible/trustee agency in accordance with Section 15381 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

Any comments received on the Initial Study and Negative Declaration will be reviewed and considered by LAFCO when making the final environmental determination. LAFCO will make a final decision regarding the appropriate environmental determination for this proposed project according to CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines prior to making a decision on the proposed project. The Environmental Checklist follows.

Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

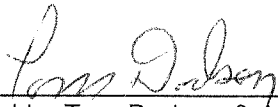
The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages. No environmental factors are checked as no issue areas are forecast to have one or more "Potentially Significant Impacts" as a result of proposed project implementation.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Geology / Soils |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology / Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use / Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Population / Housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation / Traffic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities / Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance | |

Determination (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation, the following finding is made:

- ☒ The proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☐ Although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☐ The proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- ☐ The proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect (1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and (2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it may analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- ☐ Although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.


Prepared by Tom Dodson & Associates

4-11-07
Date


Signature
LAFCO Executive Officer

April 11, 2007
Date

Environmental Checklist

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
I. AESTHETICS – Would the project:				
a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION:

a&c. **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed project consists of the activation of sewer powers for the JBWD, which in itself, would result in no physical changes to the environment and would not have an impact on aesthetics in the project area. The project also includes the acquisition, maintenance, management and operation of sewage treatment plants that would be built and operated with or without the approval of the JBWD's sewer powers by LAFCO. The development of the treatment plants would be reviewed as part of the development proposal for a project, such as a Tentative Tract Map or Parcel Map, before San Bernardino County (the project area is unincorporated territory of the County). Such plants would also be required to obtain Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) from the Regional Board. The aesthetics of building and screening these small plants would be reviewed by the County and would adhere to all applicable design standards in the Development Code.

The JBWD could assume responsibility for the treatment package plants once they are approved by the Regional Board. The District could participate in their construction, maintenance and operation once the Regional Board and County have established design, both facility and landscape requirements. Therefore, the approval of latent sewer powers would not result in a substantial alteration of the visual character and setting of the site compared with what would occur without the project.

The proposed project is not forecast to degrade visual resources, impede scenic vistas or the existing visual character of surrounding areas. Note that because a dedicated staff at the District would be responsible for both the plant and plant site, it is probable that over the long-term the landscaping at the plant site and operation of the package plant would be more effectively implemented. Because no significant impact can be identified, no mitigation is proposed.

b. **Less than Significant Impact.** Though the Joshua Tree area has many scenic resources, the proposed project would not alter or destroy any native trees, rock outcroppings or other scenic resources. Two County Scenic Routes, State Route 62 and Park Blvd./Quail Springs Road traverse the project area. If JBWD builds facilities in the future, such as a regional wastewater treatment plant, the appropriate, site-specific analysis of aesthetics would be undertaken at the time the project is proposed and prior to consideration of approval by the County. No impact to scenic resources are forecast to occur as a result of implementing the proposed project and no mitigation is required.

- d. **Less than Significant Impact.** The potential for this project to create a new source of light and glare will be the same as without the project. There would be light and glare associated with the construction and operation of the package treatment plants, but these would occur regardless of the JBWD's sewer powers. Thus, under any operational scenario no additional or different lighting impact would occur as a result of the proposed project. In any case, the majority of those impacts would be considered temporary, sporadic, and generally less than significant. The County restricts construction activities to daylight hours and the amount of security lighting needed during construction will be minimal. No long-term operations lighting is proposed, with exception of minimal security lighting that would meet all County standards for restriction to the plant site. As these impacts would occur with or without the proposed project, no potential for significant adverse lighting effects can be identified and no mitigation, other than compliance with applicable County codes and ordinances is required.

II. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES – In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION (check ___ if project is located in the Important Farmlands Overlay):

- a-c. **No Impact.** The proposed project area has no important, or significant, farmlands. Agricultural operations in the area are generally limited due to the lack of an inexpensive source of irrigation water. Activation of sewer powers and operation of proposed or future package sewer treatment plants could have no impact on agricultural activities. No known Williamson Act contract lands exist within the District service area boundary. No changes to the existing land use can occur in conjunction with approval of this project, and therefore, it has no potential to cause the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses.

No impact to agricultural resources can be identified and no mitigation is required.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
III. AIR QUALITY – Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION (discuss conformity with the South Coast Air Quality Management Plan, if applicable):

- a. **Less than Significant Impact.** The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Clean Air Act. The Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District and SCAG are responsible for air quality planning in the Mojave Desert Air Basin and have developed Air Quality Management Programs (AQMP). The AQMPs contain a comprehensive list of pollution control strategies intended to reduce emissions and achieve ambient air quality standards. In addition, SCAG has prepared the Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide (RCPG), which includes Growth Management and Regional Mobility chapters that form the basis for the land use and transportation control portions of the AQMP, and are utilized in the preparation of the air quality forecasts and consistency analysis included in the AQMP. Both the RCPG and AQMP are based on projections originating in accordance with County and City General Plans.

This project is within the jurisdiction of the County of San Bernardino and does not propose to alter land use designations or increase development densities allowed by the San Bernardino County General Plan. The project only proposes the activation of sewer powers and District maintenance and operation of proposed or future package sewage treatment plants, over which the JBWD has no direct responsibility for their creation. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project is not anticipated to conflict with or obstruct implementation of the Air Quality Management District's AQMP or any other plans which have been developed to meet regional air quality standards.

No conflicts with such planning documents can be identified and no mitigation is required.

- b. **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed project would not violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation. This project is the activation of sewer powers within the JBWD's service area and the acquisition and operation of future sewage treatment plants mandated by the County and Regional Board. The proposed project would not result in any substantial new stationary sources of long-term emissions beyond what would exist without the project. It is anticipated that the maintenance and operation of the proposed project under the direction of JBWD would emit no more pollutants than would be emitted with the package sewer treatment plant(s) under the direction of any other entity, and perhaps less due to professionally trained and qualified operators. As such, this proposed project would fall well below MDAQMD daily significance thresholds and would not have a significant impact on air quality.

Based upon the above, the proposed project would not violate any air quality standards or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- c. **Less than Significant Impact.** As stated above, the proposed project would not result in any new substantial sources of either short or long-term emissions. The development and package sewer treatment plants associated with it would be consistent with the growth anticipated by the County General Plan Result. The activation of sewer powers and management of proposed or future treatment plants would not increase any criteria pollutant to levels beyond those that would occur without the project. The project is compatible with regional air quality planning documents and potential long-term impacts associated with the proposed project would be less than significant and no mitigation is required.
- d. **Less than Significant Impact.** Sensitive receptors (e.g., residential uses, schools, etc.) are located in close proximity to the package treatment plants that would be managed by JBWD under this project. However, the location of the plants would be the same with or without the project. Package treatment plants are generally small and could be located on a lot within a housing development. Odors and other pollutant emissions that could impact sensitive receptors would be controlled by enclosing the odor-producing operations and maintaining operations to prevent generation of significant odor compounds or by cleaning the air prior to release into the surrounding area. The proposed project would not increase the magnitude of these odors, create different odors, or increase the emission of pollutants that would significantly impact sensitive receptors. Activating sewer powers would have no impact on the physical environment and management of proposed or future package plants by JBWD would not likely result in increased impacts to the physical environment. As noted above, but placing operations with a public water supply agency that already includes professionally trained personnel, the potential for odor generation may be considered less than without the proposed project.
- e. **Less than Significant Impact.** As noted above, no objectionable odors are expected as a result of the proposed project. Activation of sewer powers would not be associated with odor issues as there are no physical changes related to the activation. Operation of the treatment plants would have some associated odors. Odors are typically associated with sewage treatment plants and involve the raw influent, use of natural sewage digestion methods, chemicals, and disinfectants, utilized in treatment processes. The proposed project does not involve any more of these elements than would occur with the operation of these plants under the control of an entity other than JBWD, and, therefore, no adverse impacts are anticipated to occur if the project is approved.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES – Would the project:				
a. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION (check if project is located in the Biological Resources Overlay ____ or contains habitat for any species listed in the California Natural Diversity Database ____):

a&b. **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species or any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

According to the Joshua Tree Community Plan Draft of the Draft San Bernardino County General Plan, the high desert flora include the Joshua Tree, yucca, bunchgrass, creosote, juniper, manzanita, catsclaw, sage, cactus, and annual wildflowers. The fauna in the area include the desert tortoise, jack and cottontail rabbits, ground squirrels, chuckwalla, pinion jays, eagles, quail, roadrunners, mule deer and a variety of migratory bird species. However, as the proposed project does not make any changes

to the physical environment, none of these species would be adversely impacted that would not be impacted without the project. Therefore, impacts in this area would be less than significant

- c. **No Impact.** The proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means. None of these resources are located within the proposed project area. The project area is located in the desert. No impact is forecast to occur as a result of project implementation and no mitigation is required.
- d. **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed project would not interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites. The proposed project consists of the activation of sewer powers and the operation of future existing treatment plants. No physical impacts would occur as a result of the project that would not occur without the project. Therefore, the project is not forecast to have a substantial adverse effect on wildlife movement or corridors. No mitigation is required.
- e. **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed project would not interfere with any resources that are protected or managed under existing local ordinances. No physical project is proposed by the project that would not be built without the project. The maintenance and operation of any future treatment plants would be substantially the same under the JBWD as under the control of another entity, most probably better. No potential for significant adverse conflict with such policies is forecast to result from project implementation and no mitigation is required to address this issue.
- f. **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed project would not conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. No physical changes in the environment would occur as a result of project implementation that would not occur otherwise. The proposed project would activate sewer powers and allow for the management and operation of sewage treatment plants that would be built independently of the JBWD. Therefore, the impacts to this issue area are considered less than significant and no mitigation is required.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
V. CULTURAL RESOURCES – Would the project:				
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION:

- a&b. **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed project includes the activation of sewer powers and the operation and maintenance of proposed or future treatment plants. No historical or surface cultural resources would be disturbed as a result of approving the proposed project. Any maintenance activities would be performed at a completely disturbed site and would occur with or without project implementation.
- c. **Less than Significant Impact.** No paleontological resources would be disturbed as a result of project implementation. The proposed project includes the activation of sewer powers and the operation and maintenance of existing treatment plants. Any maintenance activities would be performed at a completely disturbed site and would occur with or without project implementation.
- d. **Less than Significant Impact.** No human burials would likely be discovered as a result of the proposed project. The proposed project includes the activation of sewer powers and the operation and maintenance of proposed or future treatment plants. Any maintenance activities would be performed at a completely disturbed site and would occur with or without project implementation.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS – Would the project:				
a. Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
• Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in onsite or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18 1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION (check ___ if project is located in the Geologic Hazards Overlay District):

- a. **Less Than Significant Impact.** The entire project area is considered seismically active, as is all of southern California. The Pinto Mountain Fault traverses the project area with a maximum probable earthquake magnitude of 6.5-7.5.

Ground Rupture

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project area is located within a seismically active area. However, as the proposed project does not propose any critical or essential uses or above ground structures or uses beyond what would occur without the project, the potential for significant impact associated with ground rupture is considered less than significant.

Strong Seismic Groundshaking

Less Than Significant Impact. As with much of southern California, it should be anticipated that the project site will be subjected to strong seismically induced ground shaking over the life of the project. This project does not propose any critical or essential uses, above ground structures or uses beyond what would occur without the project. Compliance with applicable building standards during initial construction and installation of the future package plants, including the Uniform Building Code, is considered adequate to reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level. Note that following an earthquake with associated ground shaking, the JBWD has more manpower and financial resources in the community to ensure repair and operational integrity of a package plant than a local homeowners association or other maintenance entity that does not have a continuous ability to respond with the operation of a plant as its primary responsibility.

Seismically Related Ground Failure

Less Than Significant Impact. Groundwater occurs at depths in excess of 100 feet below ground surface in both the Joshua Tree and Copper Mountain Subbasins which underlies the JBWD. The potential for liquefaction, subsidence and other seismically related ground failure is considered low in the project area.

This project, activation of sewer powers and operation of proposed or future package sewage treatment plants, does not propose any above ground structures or place humans onsite beyond what would occur without the project. The potential for impact associated with induced ground failure is considered less than significant.

Landslides

Less Than Significant Impact. The vast majority of the project area consists of relatively shallow slopes with no potential for landslides. A small part of the southern part of the project area is hillside with some potential for landslide. However, the package treatment plants would most likely be located in the flat areas of the project area due to land use restrictions on residential densities. The proposed project would not include building any structures. It would activate sewer powers and allow the acquisition and operation of proposed or future sewage treatment plants. No physical change in the environment would occur as a result of the proposed project. Therefore, the potential for landslides to affect the project is considered negligible and no more than without the proposed project.

- b. **Less Than Significant Impact.** The soils in the project area are rocky in the foothills and sandy in the flat desert area. These soils have a potential for erosion from flood waters and wind. However, the long-term operation of the package sewage treatment facilities by JBWD has no potential to result in substantial soil erosion from the site.

Sediment is the most common pollutant washed from work sites, creating multiple problems once it enters the waterways. Maintenance activities must, therefore, occur in a manner that seeks to provide the maximum feasible sediment control. Sediment control is important for a variety of reasons: eroded soils can enter waterbodies and channels, raising water levels and blocking culverts, and increasing the chances for flooding of surrounding properties; sediment can get deposited onto streets and roadways by vehicles leaving the site or by stormwater runoff, thereby making travel on these roadways more dangerous; sediment carries petroleum and other pollutants into streams, lakes and other waterbodies,

thereby affecting water quality; and sediment reduce light penetration into aquatic areas, making photosynthesis more difficult for water plants and affecting other forms of aquatic life.

Water quality impacts would be the greatest during the initial construction phase due to excavation, grading, and movement of construction vehicles on unpaved surfaces. Soil excavation and grading operations often contribute to urban runoff pollution. The proposed project would maintain proposed or future treatment plants and no major grading or construction would occur beyond what would occur without the proposed project.

Long-term erosion impacts resulting from project implementation would be less than significant. No further mitigation is required.

- c. **Less Than Significant Impact.** See substantiation (a) above.
- d. **Less Than Significant Impact.** The soils are not considered expansive and the proposed project, which includes maintenance and operation of sewage treatment plants, will not create a substantial risk to life or property. No mitigation beyond implementation of standard maintenance and operations techniques is required.
- e. **Less Than Significant Impact.** This project does not propose the use of any septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems that would not occur without the proposed project. No impact will result and no mitigation is required.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS –				
Would the project:				
a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION:

a&b. **Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporation.** Operation and maintenance of a sewage treatment plant could involve the use of chemicals such as chlorine or sodium hypochlorite for disinfection of effluent. However, secondary treatment does not usually require the disinfection of effluent prior to disposal in septage ponds and disinfection of effluent is not proposed at this time. The proposed project would only use the chemicals required to meet treatment standards set by the

Regional Board. These chemicals would be used with or without the project by any entity operating and maintaining the treatment plants. The spill prevention and control and countermeasures plan would adequately control risks associated with use of such chemicals. Compliance with this plan is mandatory and no further mitigation is required.

- c. **No Impact.** No facilities would be built as a result of implementing the proposed project. The physical impacts to the environment would be the same with the project as without the project. Any future projects that cause a change in the physical environment would be evaluated at the time of project approval. Additional sewer and treatment facilities would be sited considering a number of factors, including the location of schools. No mitigation is required.
- d. **No Impact.** The County of San Bernardino publishes a summary of CAL/EPA Facility Inventory Data Base Hazardous Waste and Substances Sites List. The proposed project does not include the construction of new facilities, only the maintenance and operation of proposed or future facilities that would not be built on known hazardous waste sites. Therefore, there would be no impact to this issue area beyond what would occur without the project. If and when projects are proposed in the future related to providing additional sewer services or wastewater treatment, further analysis of this issue area would be undertaken. No impact can be identified and no further mitigation required.
- e&f. **No Impact.** The proposed project area includes a private airport, Roy Williams Airport. No potential for the project to expose people or property to a significant risk of hazard from aircraft operations can be identified. Activation of sewer powers would not impact airport operations or expose people to dangers associated with the airport. Operating and maintaining treatment plants would not interfere with or be put at risk from airport operations. No mitigation is required.
- g. **No Impact.** The project area has numerous public roads. However, the project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Maintenance and operation of the treatment plants would use existing roadways and the treatment plant sites would include the provision of an access road. The project will maintain existing access to the plants as approved by the County. Any future development of sewer and treatment facilities would be considered a project and be analyzed separately for access issues. No impact can be identified and no further mitigation is required.
- h. **No Impact.** The proposed project includes areas subject to wildland fires. However, the project does not propose the development of any human occupancy structures or facilities open to the public. The site will be fenced and closed to the public. The project does not propose the use of any flammable or explosive materials within these wildland areas. Typically, treatment plants would not be located in these areas due to topography and therefore no potential to expose people to the hazard of wildland fires or the risk of contributing to the creation of wildland fires can be identified and no mitigation is required.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY – Would the project:				
a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation onsite or offsite?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding onsite or offsite?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g. Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h. Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
j. Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION:

- a. **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed project would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. The project would change the entity that would operate and maintain future package sewage treatment plants, but otherwise make no changes that would cause the treatment plants to violate discharge requirements. The JBWD would work with the Regional Board to ensure compliance with the WDR and protect basin quality. As the water purveyor in the area, the JBWD has an interest in protecting the groundwater basin quality. Any percolation of treated effluent into groundwater treated at future treatment plants proposed to be managed and operated by JBWD could have a direct effect on long-term groundwater quality. One of the reasons JBWD is requesting activation of sewer powers and maintenance and operation of the sewage treatment plants is to be able to participate in the protection the long-term quality of the local groundwater aquifer.

The WDR would require reduction of Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD), Nitrates, suspended solids and other constituents in the treated sewage. The JBWD would comply with these requirements, and if feasible, reduce concentrations of these and other constituents to lower concentrations than required by the Regional Board. The septage pits, or other sewage disposal structures, would not be located in areas near potable water wells and all other provisions to protect potable water sources would be employed to the maximum ability technically feasible.

No further mitigation is required.

- b. **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed project would not substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level. No groundwater extractions are proposed as part of the project unless there are groundwater monitoring requirements in the future to track effluent percolation in the groundwater basin. The proposed project consists of operating sewage treatment plants and activation of sewer powers which could result in a benefit to groundwater quality and quantity as part of a future holistic groundwater management approach. However, the project, as analyzed, only changes the entity performing maintenance and operation of treatment plants and would not have any adverse impact on groundwater. No mitigation is required (please also refer to response a).
- c. **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed project would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation onsite or offsite. Activation of sewer powers, in itself, would have no physical impact on the project area. The maintenance and operation of treatment plants by JBWD would not alter drainage patterns, but serve to maintain the drainage patterns approved for the site. The general project area is subject to erosion from wind and flash flooding. However, proper maintenance would minimize erosion impacts from these weather-related. There would be no anticipated erosion or sedimentation problems due to the proposed project.
- d. **Less than Significant Impact.** Please refer to issue VIII.c above. This project has no potential to substantially alter existing or planned for drainage patterns or increase the volume of flow. Maintaining and operating proposed or future treatment plants would not alter drainage patterns and would have no impact on this issue. The activation of sewer powers would have no impact on the physical environment and therefore would have no impact on this issue. No further mitigation is required.
- e. **Less than Significant Impact.** Please refer to issues a-d above. Onsite runoff from the treatment plant sites would not exceed the capacity of the surrounding drainage system as a result of the proposed project. The proposed transfer of ownership, maintenance and operations of the treatment

plants would not have the potential to cause significant modification to downstream drainages or to cause polluted runoff to adversely impact surface or groundwater quality.

- f. **No Impact.** No other potential to cause significant water quality degradation from the proposed project has been identified. See the evaluation for issues VIII.a-e above. No further mitigation is required.
- g. **No Impact.** The proposed project does not involve the construction of any housing. No significant exposure of housing or people to 100-year flood hazards will result from implementing the proposed project. As the package plants are sited in the future, both the County and the Regional Board would have to ensure that the specific location for such plants are not exposed to significant flood hazards. This is a routine design requirement where a drainage report is submitted to these agencies to verify that the facilities would not be exposed to any 100-year, or greater, flood hazard. The District would assume responsibility for the package plant facilities after such siting review is completed and would carry out its maintenance and operation activities at a properly sited facility.
- h. **No Impact.** Please refer to issue VIII.g above. No adverse impact can be identified and no mitigation is required.
- i. **No Impact.** Please refer to issues VIII.g and VIII.h above. No large water bodies exist on or near the project site. Essentially all of the project area where sewage treatment plants would be operated is considered desert. No large bodies of water exist in the project area. Therefore, the proposed project would have no potential to expose people or property to a significant risk of flood hazards due to failure of a levee or dam. No impact can be identified and no mitigation is required.
- j. **No Impact.** No potential for significant exposure to seiche, tsunami, or mudflow hazards exist at the project site. No impact can be identified and no mitigation is required.

IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING – Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION:

- a. **No Impact.** The project would not divide an established community. The area includes the entire JBWD service area. Activating sewer powers would not divide an established community, neither would maintaining and operating future treatment plant facilities. Therefore, the proposed project has no potential to physically divide an established community. No impact can be identified and no mitigation is required.

- b. **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed project is within the Joshua Tree Community Plan area and the Homestead Valley Community Plan area of San Bernardino County. The project would not change any land use designations or conflict with any land uses in the area. The project would result in the activation of sewer powers and operating and maintaining existing sewage treatment plants. No impact on current land use planning designations will result that would not occur without the proposed project and no mitigation is required.

Another issue of concern in the local community is whether the activation of sewer powers could result in a growth inducing effect on the community. As proposed, the activation of sewer powers will be implemented in a passive manner. The JBWD is not proposing to construct a regional wastewater treatment plant with an extensive sewer collection system. At this time the rationale for activating sewer powers is to ensure that local package treatment plants are properly managed, after they are approved and constructed in accordance with County and Regional Board requirements. The objective is to ensure that the wastewater discharged from these facilities does not degrade water quality in the local groundwater aquifer which is the District's sole source of water supply for its service area. Thus, as noted above, at this time the JBWD's role is passive, i.e., it will implement its sewer powers only when other agencies act to allow development (residential or commercial) that can not rely upon subsurface septic tank-leach line systems. In this role, the JBWD has no potential to induce significant growth because it is not approving development and other parties could operate such facilities. The District's interest is to ensure that if such systems are installed they do not fail and cause groundwater quality degradation.

What happens if the JBWD decides in the future to install an area-wide collection system and treatment plant? The District must perform a separate, second-tier evaluation of such project, including whether such a project could cause significant local growth inducement. As this time there is no such proposal, and making any assumptions about the JBWD's future response to future community growth is considered speculative and will not be further pursued.

- c. **No Impact.** The proposed project area has a variety of flora and fauna and there are local policies that call for preservation of habitat. However, the proposed project would not result in impacts to these resources as the project does not include the development of land or features that would disturb wildlife. Therefore, no impact to such plans will result from implementing this plan and no mitigation is required.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
X. MINERAL RESOURCES – Would the project:				
a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION (check ___ if project is located within the Mineral Resources Zone Overlay):

- a&b. **No Impact.** The proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state or in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan. The proposed project does not include construction or disturbance of areas that would not

be disturbed without the project. Activation of sewer powers has no physical impact on the environment. Maintaining and operating treatment plants would not impact mineral resources. No impact will result and no mitigation is required.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XI. NOISE – Would the project result in:				
a. Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION (check if the project is located in the Noise Hazard Overlay District ____ or is subject to severe noise levels according to the General Plan Noise Element ____):

- a. **Less than Significant Impact.** The noise generated by the proposed project would be limited to operations and maintenance activities, and would not result in any substantial long term noise source associated with the proposed treatment plants. The treatment plants would be designed to include noise attenuation for any parts of the routine operation that would generate excessive noise relative to the surrounding land uses and be contained within buildings to reduce noise impacts on surrounding uses to acceptable levels. The proposed project would be required to comply with the County noise ordinance and General Plan noise requirements for noise conflicts. Therefore, ongoing operations and maintenance to ensure proper operation of the facilities would result in a less than significant impact. No mitigation beyond compliance with mandatory County noise standards is required.
- b. **Less than Significant Impact.** No groundborne noise or vibration will be generated by maintenance and operation of the treatment plants beyond what would occur without the project. No impact can be identified and no mitigation beyond compliance with mandatory County standards is required.

- c. **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed project will not cause any permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project above levels existing without the project. The project would not result in any new stationary or permanent noise sources. The maintenance and operation activities associated with the proposed project would occur with or without the proposed approval of the proposed action and potential long-term impacts and are therefore considered less than significant. No mitigation is required.
- d. **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed project, activation of sewer powers and maintenance and operation of existing facilities, would not cause a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project. Without the proposed project, the same operations and maintenance activities would occur and be performed by a different entity. As the proposed project would have to be operated in compliance with the County noise ordinance and General Plan noise consistency requirements, the impacts to this issue are considered less than significant.
- e&f. **Less than Significant Impact.** The project area includes the Roy Williams Airport, a private airstrip. However, a sewage treatment plant is not considered a significant noise source that would interfere with airport operations or surrounding uses. The airport noise would not interfere with maintenance and operation of the treatment plants. No potential to expose people to excess noise associated with such activities will result from this project and no mitigation is required.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING – Would the project:				
a. Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION:

- a. **Less Than Significant Impact.** Please refer to the discussion regarding growth inducement in the land use section of this document, Section IX. This project is the activation of sewer powers in order to operate and maintain sewage treatment plants that are built to serve approved development projects. The project is designed to transfer the operating and maintenance function to JBWD rather than a private entity in order to streamline water and water-related services in the area and provide a more integrated system that disposes of sewage and protects long-term groundwater basin quality. The operation of the package treatment plants will not induce population growth beyond that already approved for the Joshua Tree area. In other words, the District's role would be passive, i.e., in response to decisions being made by other agencies, including the County and Regional Board.

Any new treatment plants proposed in the future as part of the exercise of sewer powers by JBWD would have extensive environmental review that would include an analysis of growth inducement. The proposed project does not result in additional infrastructure that would not occur without the project. It just transfers operational responsibility of existing infrastructure to JBWD. No further impacts will result and no mitigation is required.

- b&c. **No Impact.** No housing is proposed as part of this project. Implementation of the proposed project would not displace any housing or people such that construction of replacement housing elsewhere would be necessary. No impact can be identified, and no mitigation is required.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES – Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
a. Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION:

Less than Significant. This project is the activation of sewer powers and the operation and maintenance of proposed or future sewage treatment plants. This projects potential effects on public services is evaluated as follows:

- a. Fire Protection
The proposed project will not increase the demand for fire protection services. Project implementation will not result in additional people or structures on any site. No impact can be identified and no mitigation is required.
- b. Police Protection
The proposed project does not involve elements that would attract criminal activity. The proposed project would include operation of treatment plant facilities that will be fenced and not accessible to the public. There may be surfaces at the treatment plant sites that could be targeted for graffiti. However, this impact would occur with or without the JBWD maintaining the treatment plants. Implementation of the proposed project will not increase the demand for law enforcement services in the project area. No mitigation is required.
- c&d. Schools / Parks
The proposed project would not increase population in the area which could affect these public services. Provision of sewer services and maintenance of treatment plants would occur in response to approved development within the context of the General Plan land use plan and would not occur as a result of the

proposed project. This project will not impact schools or parks beyond what would occur without the project. No impact can be identified and no further mitigation is required.

e. Other Public Facilities

The placement of these facilities within the jurisdiction of the JBWD could place an additional financial demand on the District to fund maintenance and operation of the treatment plants. However, fees charged to property owners for sewer services would be adequate to cover operation and maintenance costs for the plants and no further mitigation is required.

XIV. RECREATION –

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION:

- a&b. **No Impact.** See Item 13.d, Public Services (Parks). The proposed project will not increase the area population nor provide for development beyond that already allowed. No impact to recreational facilities can be identified and no mitigation is required.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC – Would the project:				
a. Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. Result in inadequate parking capacity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g. Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION:

a,b

&d. Less than Significant Impact. There would be no short-term impacts to the area transportation system associated with the proposed project. Short-term or temporary impacts are those associated with construction and no construction is anticipated to occur as part of the proposed project. Long -term impacts are associated with and operation and maintenance of the treatment plants, but not with activation of sewer powers. The activation of sewer powers would not make any physical changes to area circulation system, either direct modifications to roadways or significant new volumes of traffic.

This part of the project that is the maintenance and operation of sewage treatment plants may require a few trips per day on average, but may require less than one trip per day depending on the type of technology that is used to maintain and operate the plants. It is projected that the delivery of equipment, materials and worker commutes will result in less than a maximum of about 4 vehicle trips on a given day to the project site. Other than the worker commutes, these trips will occur over the entire work day. Remote monitoring may be used to eliminate all need for daily trips to the treatment plants. In any case, this project would not increase such impacts beyond the level anticipated to occur without the project.

This project will not generate any new substantial adverse effects on traffic and the circulation system. No new impacts can be identified and no further mitigation is required.

- c. **No Impact.** The proposed project area includes the Roy Williams Airport. However, the project does not involve the use of aircraft nor will it have an affect on traffic or air traffic patterns. Because no impact can be identified, no mitigation is required.
- e. **No Impact.** The proposed project would not change access roads to the treatment plants or open the treatment plants to the public. Access to meet County requirements would be incorporated into the site design of the treatment plants and would not be impacted by the project as the treatment plants would exist at the time of transfer to ownership and/or operations responsibility to the JBWD. No additional emergency access is required.
- f. **No Impact.** Adequate parking would already be provided on the treatment plant sites to accommodate any operations and maintenance personnel vehicles. No further mitigation is required.
- g. **No Impact.** The project will not generate a substantial amount of new traffic and will not conflict with any adopted plans, policies or programs supporting alternative transportation. No impact will result and no mitigation required.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS – Would the project:				
a. Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. Be served by a landfill(s) with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION:

a,b

&e

No Impact. This project is the activation of sewer powers and transfer of the maintenance and operations responsibilities of sewage treatment plants. Wastewater will be treated during project implementation. However, the project, authorization of sewer powers for JBWD, has no potential to generate any wastewater and, therefore, has no potential to result in the need for new or expanded wastewater treatment facilities. Maintenance of wastewater facilities is necessary to meet existing demand for service but does not result in increased demand for treatment capacity. The proposed project does not propose the expansion of facility capacity. It changes the entity performing maintenance and operations functions at proposed or future treatment plants.

Compliance with waste discharge requirements will be an integral part of project implementation and JBWD would work closely with the Regional Board to help protect groundwater basin water quality in the area underlying the sewage treatment facilities. The proposed project will not result in any new impacts or increase the severity of previously identified impacts. In fact, the use of professionally

trained District personnel to maintain and operation the facility should enhance the feasibility of the future package plants to meet WDRs. No further analysis or mitigation is required.

- c. **Less than Significant Impact.** See Issues XVI.a,b&e above. The proposed project would not require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of proposed or future facilities. This project is the activation of sewer powers and the transfer of sewage treatment plant operations to JBWD and would not include any additions or changes to drainage facilities. No significant adverse effects have been identified and no mitigation is required.
- d. **Less than Significant Impact.** Implementation of the proposed project will not require additional sources of water beyond the small amounts required for general maintenance, landscaping and operation of the facility. The amounts of incidental water use would not likely change with the entity performing the maintenance and operations duties associated with the treatment plants. No impact can be identified and no mitigation is required.
- f. **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed project is not forecast to generate substantial solid waste requiring management, except sludge which is address in the following paragraph. Some maintenance and operations activities would result in a need to dispose of some solid waste and there may also be a need to dispose of hazardous waste. Material that can be recycled will be made available for recycling or disposed of at an appropriately licensed facility. Hazardous materials would be disposed of appropriately following local, state, and federal regulations. No significant impact will result and no mitigation is required.

All sewage treatment facilities generate some amount of biosolids from the solids received at the plant in the wastewater. Such biosolids are generally managed by shipping them to a composting facility, a land disposal site or a landfill, which has been permitted to handle such materials. The JBWD would manage biosolids as a component of the exercise of their sewer powers and management responsibilities for future package treatment plants. Since the method of managing biosolids is controlled through the WDR permitting process and through existing regulations that mandate how such biosolids must be handled, no additional mitigation is required to ensure that any biosolids generated by future package treatment plants are properly handled.

- g. **No Impact.** The proposed project would comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. No solid waste impacts which could conflict with any known regulations are forecast to occur. No mitigation is required.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE –				
a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUBSTANTIATION:

The Joshua Basin Water District (JBWD) proposes to activate its sewer powers as outlined under the State Water Code Section 31100 in order to acquire, manage, maintain and operate "package secondary treatment plants" anticipated to be built in the near future by private entities in response to the need for treatment and disposal of sewage from new development projects. The proposed project can be examined as two separate, yet interconnected parts. The first part, an activation of latent sewer powers, would not result in any direct physical change to the environment, but is necessary in order for the management of the "package secondary treatment plants" to be performed by JBWD. The second part is the acquisition, management, operation and maintenance of the "package secondary treatment plants".

Under the proposed project, JBWD would acquire and operate the "package secondary treatment plants" once they are installed by the developer in accordance with requirements of the Regional Board and County development requirements. The wastewater quality would be regulated through waste discharge requirements administered through the Regional Board and disposal of the treated effluent would be accomplished through a surface pond, subsurface seepage pit or leach field. The only immediate difference in wastewater treatment under the proposed project is the party responsible for operating and maintaining the treatment plants and the party directly responsible for meeting the Regional Board WDRs for the package plants.

- a. No significant impacts to fish or wildlife or their habitat would occur as a result of the proposed project. Activation of sewer powers and assumption of sewage treatment plant operations and maintenance activities to JBWD rather than a private entity does not result in any physical impact to the environment. In the long term, the project has the potential to improve the ability to coordinate water issues in the area as JBWD would oversee and coordinate both the potable water and wastewater needs of the project area. This could be considered a long-term benefit to fish and wildlife as water quality and long-term water availability could be improved over what would occur without the project. The project would

not eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory. All impacts of the project would be less than significant.

- b. This project is the activation of the sewer powers of JBWD and transfer of ownership and operation of proposed or future sewage treatment plants to the district. Without the project, the same physical impacts would occur in the environment. Therefore, this project does not have the potential to result in either individual or cumulative impacts that are greater than the impacts that would occur without the project.
- c. This project will not result directly or indirectly in environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on humans. The operation of the treatment plants would occur with or without the project. Transferring responsibility of treatment plant operations may benefit humans and the environment by potentially improving the quality of water discharged to the area being served by the treatment plant or improving treatment reliability.

Conclusion

The proposed project is not forecast to cause any significant adverse environmental impacts to any of the environmental resource issues addressed in this Initial Study, without any mitigation. The Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO or Commission) for San Bernardino County proposes to issue a Negative Declaration as the appropriate environmental determination for this project to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act. The Commission will issue a Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration and distribute this document for public review for a 30-day review process as this project has State Responsible or Trustee Agency review requirements. Assuming potential project impacts remain less than significant, and after receipt of comments and development of responses to comments, the Commission will hold a public meeting to consider adopting the Negative Declaration at future date for which the specific date has not yet been identified. All parties that submit comments will be notified of the date and time of the LAFCO Board meeting.

Mitigation Measures

(Any mitigation measures which are not "self-monitoring" shall have a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program prepared and adopted at time of project approval.)

All impacts associated with the proposed project are anticipated to be less than significant. No mitigation is required.

References

- Correspondence from San Bernardino County LAFCO to Joshua Basin Water District, "Departmental Review Committee (DRC) Findings", November 16, 2006.
- Evaluation of Geohydrologic Framework, Recharge Estimates and Ground-Water Flow of the Joshua Tree Area, San Bernardino County, California, US Geological survey, 2004.
- Homestead Valley Community Plan, San Bernardino County General Plan, Final Draft, February 2007.
- Joshua Basin Package Wastewater Treatment Plant Feasibility Report, Dudek & Associates, Inc., May 23, 2006.
- Joshua Basin Water District, Wastewater Feasibility Study, Dudek & Associates, Inc., May 31, 2006.
- Joshua Tree Community Plan, San Bernardino County General Plan, Final Draft, February 2007.
- Justification for Proposal and Preliminary Environmental Description Form, Joshua Basin Water District Wastewater Treatment Services, October 2006.
- Resolution #06-803 of the Board of Directors of the Joshua Basin Water District, and attached LAFCO Plan For Sewer Service, September 6, 2006.
- San Bernardino County General Plan DEIR, September 2006.
- Water Quality Control Plan, Colorado River Basin - Region 7, Regional Water Quality Control Board, including amendments through October 2005.

The map displays the Joshua Basin Water District, which is highlighted in blue. The district is situated within a larger geographic area defined by a grid of red lines. The grid labels include T01SR08E, T02NR07E, T03NR06E, T01SR07E, T02NR08E, T03NR07E, T01SR06E, T02NR06E, T03NR05E, T01SR05E, T02NR05E, T03NR04E, T01SR04E, T02NR04E, and T03NR03E. The map also shows various neighborhoods and landmarks, including Flamingo Heights, Pioneer Town, Yucca Valley, and Joshua Tree. A legend in the bottom right corner identifies the blue-shaded area as the Joshua Basin Water District and provides the date the map was prepared: April 10, 2007. The map is oriented with North at the top, as indicated by a north arrow in the bottom right corner.